REMARKS

Fig. 17 has been amended to correct an inadvertent error.

Claims 13-23, 26-30, 32-33 and 35-36 stand rejected under § 102 on the basis of Bouvier et al. '946. Independent claims 13, 27, 30, 32-33 and 35-39 have been amended to overcome this rejection, and applicants traverse because Bouvier et al. do not disclose (or suggest) a device control unit that recognizes the prohibition of use of a failed device if the device control unit cannot access the failed device.

Bouvier et al. is concerned with technologies for detecting a processor failure and recovering from the processor failure in a multiprocessor system. In the system of Bouvier et al., when processing unit 202 has not set a specific bit of register unit 256, the countdown by timer unit 252 elapses and a time-out signal is sent to control unit 250. On receipt of the time-out signal, control unit 250 resets the system and further disables processing unit 202 by exercising a control such as holding processing unit 202 in a reset state (see col. 7, lines 30-50). Thus, an invention objective of Bouvier et al. is to detect a processor failure within a multiprocessor system.

In contrast, an objective of the present invention is to detect a failure of a device manufactured and sold by a variety of vendors and used in an open system. Here, the present invention is directed to devices represented by I/O buses, display adaptors, display units, communication adaptors, storage units, and so on, not to a processor.

The examiner seems to equate the time-out signal sent from timer unit 252 with the notification of a failure associated with claim 13, and the step in which control unit 250

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disables processing unit 202 with the action of accessing the failed device in claim 13. He appears further to understand that disabling of processing unit 202 is equivalent to the claim 26 feature in which the state of a failed device is changed to a state in which other units can identify that a use of the device is prohibited.

Applicants contend that, in the system of Bouvier et al., timer unit 252 sends out a time-out signal, which indicates an occurrence of a failure, and then recovery actions are initiated. Control unit 250 disables processing unit 202 as one of these initiated recovery actions, rather than control unit 250 being caused to take the action of accessing the failed processing unit 202 for notifying of the prohibition of use of processing unit 202. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 13, 16, 24 and 25 stand rejected under § 102 on the basis of Gardiner et al. '357. Applicants traverse this rejection because Gardiner et al. do not disclose (or suggest) a device control unit that recognizes the prohibition of use of a failed device if the device control unit is unable to access the failed device.

Gardiner et al. is concerned with failure management within a computer system. According to Gardiner et al., the system has a plurality of entities 12 each including a service element 14 such as a CPU and a management agent 17. A fault management element 16 of the management agent 17 comprises error detector 30, error handler 40, fault handler 50, tester 60 and control 70 (see col. 3, lines 54-67; col. 4, lines 25-28). The fault handler 50 acts upon error information received from the error handler 40, determines the location of the fault and then initiates the appropriate repair action (see col. 5, lines 10-18).

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The examiner seems to equate the error information from the error handler 40 with the notification of a failure associated with claim 13, and the fault repair action of the fault handler 50 with the action of accessing the failed device in claim 13.

Applicants contend that, in this system, the error detector 30 detects an occurrence of a fault by monitoring the behavior of the service element 14, and the fault management element 16 is not caused to take the action of accessing the failed service element 14 for notifying of the prohibition of using the service element 14. Withdrawal of this rejection is also requested.

For the foregoing reasons, applicants believe that this case is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The examiner should call applicants' attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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